## News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Tuesday, November 28, 2006

## Wyoming Efforts Recognize World AIDS Day Friday

The Wyoming Department of Healthøs HIV/AIDS/Hepatitis Program is working together with representatives from Laramie County Community College, local public health offices and family planning clinics, and several community-based organizations to recognize Friday (December 1) as World AIDS Day with office Time Is Nowo as a theme.

It is estimated that more than 140 persons are living with HIV/AIDS in Wyoming, with more than 40 million persons around the world. World AIDS Day is designed to focus attention and generate revenue for prevention, treatment, care and support for persons at risk of and living with HIV/AIDS.

Rob Johnston, HIV prevention coordinator with the Wyoming Department of Health, said the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) attacks the body immune system. õAlthough there is no cure, current medications can help many people infected with HIV live longer and healthier lives, ö Johnston said.

õIn Wyoming, the virus is most commonly spread by sexual contact or by sharing needles and/or other injection equipment with someone who is infected,ö Johnston. õIn addition, babies born to HIV-infected women may become infected before or during birth or through breast-feeding after birth.ö

Johnston noted a gradual increase over the past few years in new infections, especially among women. Men who have unprotected sex with other men still account for a little more than 50 percent of Wyoming cases.

Students at LCCC selected the theme, and LCCC students and staff selected a poster designed by Jared Michaud, a 2<sup>nd</sup> year design student, to represent it. The Wyoming Department of Health has distributed the posters, coffee sleeves with contact information and World AIDS Day fact sheets to coffee kiosks and coffee houses around the state. The poster design is also included in current Wyoming television advertising.

Wyoming residents are encouraged to know their HIV status. Testing sites are located throughout the state, and in most cases people can be tested at no cost to themselves. For more information, contact Rob Johnston, HIV prevention coordinator at 307-237-2044.

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